Worshiping the Beloved

وَما خَلَقتُ الجِنَّ وَالإِنسَ إِلّا

لِيَعبُدُونِ

AL-BURĀQ

The status of a person can only be valued based on how much one worships God and is connected to Him. Only by doing this can a person achieve the state that one is meant to reach, becoming a manifestation of the verse

﴿I did not create the jinn and the humans except that they may worship Me﴾

This is not limited to praying, fasting, and other acts of worship. It also depends on the person's thoughts, intentions, and relationships with those around him. All these things must be dedicated to the Creator and based on what He loves and is pleased with. A person's purpose in any good deed must be gaining His pleasure and nearness.

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al-Burāq Publications

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Dedication

The publication of this book was made possible through the generous support of our donors.

Please recite *Sūrat al-Fātihah* and ask God for the Divine reward (*thawāb*) to be conferred upon the donors and also the souls of all the deceased in whose memory their loved ones have contributed graciously towards the publication of *Worshiping the Beloved.*

We begin by giving all praise and thanks to God ﷻ for giving us the *tawfīq* to translate this book. He has guided us and without Him, we would not have been guided to the straight path embodied by the Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ and the Ahl al-Bayt عليهم السلام.

This book is dedicated to all the scholars, martyrs and believers who worked tirelessly to promote the pure Muḥammadan path.

We want to also give our thanks and appreciation to all believers from around the world and acknowledge the team which helped al-Burāq Publications complete this work, spending countless hours to make its publication possible. Please recite Sūrat al-Fātiḥah on behalf of them, their families, and their marḥūmīn.

This book is dedicated in honor of the following individuals. Please remember them in your prayers and may God ﷻ have mercy on them and their loved ones.

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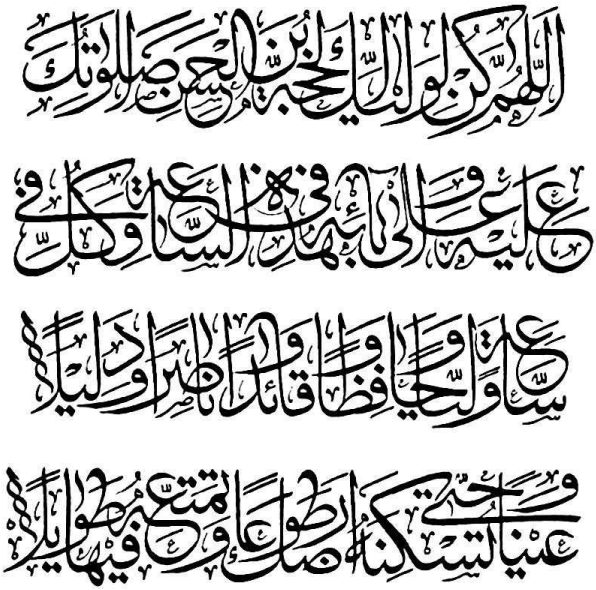
Du'ā' al-Ḥujjah



O God, be, for Your representative, the Ḥujjat (proof), son of al-Ḥasan, Your blessings be upon him and his forefathers, in this hour and in every hour: a guardian, a protector, a leader, a helper, a proof, and an eye - until You make him live on the Earth, in obedience (to You), and cause him to live in it for a long time.

Terms of Respect

The following Arabic phrases have been used throughout this book in their respective places to show the reverence which the noble personalities deserve.

ﷻ

Used for God, meaning:
Exalted and Sublime (Perfect) is He

ﷺ

Used for Prophet Muḥammad, meaning:
Blessings from God be upon him and his family

ﷺ

Used for a man (singular) of a high status, meaning:
Peace be upon him

ﷺ

Used for a woman (singular) of a high status, meaning:
Peace be upon her

ﷺ

Used for men/women (dual) of a high status, meaning:
Peace be upon them both

ﷺ

Used for men and/or women (plural) of a high status, meaning:
Peace be upon them all

ﷺ

Used for Imām Muḥammad al-Mahdī, meaning:
May God hasten his return

ﷺ

Used for a deceased scholar, meaning:
May his resting [burial] place remain pure

Transliteration Table

The method of transliteration of Islamic terminology from the Arabic language has been carried out according to the standard transliteration table below.

ء	ʾ	ر	r	ف	f
ا	a	ز	z	ق	q
ب	b	س	s	ك	k
ت	t	ش	sh	ل	l
ث	th	ص	ṣ	م	m
ج	j	ض	ḍ	ن	n
ح	ḥ	ط	ṭ	و	w
خ	kh	ظ	ẓ	ه	h
د	d	ع	ʿ	ي	y
ذ	dh	غ	gh		
Long Vowels					
ا	ā	و	ū	ي	ī
Short Vowels					
ـَ	a	ـُ	u	ـِ	i

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Introduction

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم

In the Name of God, the Beneficent, the Merciful

Praise be to God, the Lord of all worlds, and may He send blessings and salutations upon our master Muḥammad ﷺ and his pure family عليهم السلام.

The status of a person can only be valued based on how much he worships God ﷻ and is connected to Him ﷻ. Only by doing this can a person achieve the state that he is meant to reach, becoming a manifestation of the verse:

﴿وَما خَلَقتُ الجِنَّ وَالإِنسَ إِلّا لِيَعبُدونِ﴾

﴿wa-mā khalaqtu l-jinna wa-l-'insa 'illā li-ya'budūni﴾

﴿I did not create the jinn and the humans except that they may worship Me﴾[1]

This is not limited to praying, fasting, and other acts of worship. It also depends on the person's thoughts, intentions, and relationships with those

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[1] Sūrat al-Dhāriyāt, Verse 56.

around him. All these things must be dedicated to the Creator ﷻ and based on what He loves and is pleased with. A person's purpose in any good deed must be gaining His ﷻ pleasure and nearness.

There are many manifestations of true worshipfulness. For this reason, we have chosen to include some topics related to worship in this book, explaining them easily and straightforwardly based on the Noble Qur'ān and the noble sunnah. We intend to offer this material to the noble scholars and preachers of Islam, hoping it will be a helpful resource when preaching and spreading Islam. We ask our Master ﷻ to grant us all success so that we may be honest worshipful servants and accept our and your good deeds.

The Purpose of Creation

The goal of the chapter is to know the primary purpose of creation and reorienting our relationship to this world through understanding the following:

1. The universe is created with wisdom and purpose.

2. The Islamic view on the purpose of creation.

3. The following verse:

﴿وَابْتَغِ فِيمَا آتَاكَ اللَّهُ الدَّارَ الْآخِرَةَ ۖ وَلَا تَنسَ نَصِيبَكَ مِنَ الدُّنْيَا﴾

﴿wa-btaghi fī-mā 'ātāka llāhu d-dāra l-'ākhirata wa-lā tansa naṣībaka mina d-dunyā﴾

﴿By the means of what God has given you, seek the abode of the Hereafter, while not forgetting your share of this world﴾[2]

4. Blameworthy diversions (*lahw*) and purposeful diversions.

Imām ʿAlī ﷺ: "When God created the creation, He did not need their obedience, and He was secure from their disobedience. The disobedience of those

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[2] Sūrat al-Qaṣaṣ, Verse 77.

who disobey him does not harm Him, and the obedience of those who obey Him does not benefit Him."[3]

Someone may think that the acts and righteous deeds that the pious perform and the virtuous qualities and praiseworthy acts that lead to divine nearness that God ﷻ requires are things that God ﷻ needs. For this reason, the Imām ﷺ began his sermon on the pious with the above words. He ﷺ alerted people that God ﷻ is free from such a description and above deficit and need. The Imām ﷺ explains that God's ﷻ purpose behind creation and existence was not to bring a benefit upon Himself or drive away harm like humans do. God is the Living One, the Sustainer, who is absolute in His essence, attributes, and actions:

﴿يا أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ أَنتُمُ الفُقَراءُ إِلَى اللَّهِ ۖ وَاللَّهُ هُوَ الغَنِيُّ الحَمِيدُ﴾

﴿yā-'ayyuhā n-nāsu 'antumu l-fuqarā'u 'ilā llāhi wa-llāhu huwa l-ghaniyyu l-ḥamīd﴾

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[3] Sharīf Raḍī, Muḥammad b. al-Ḥusayn, *Nahj al-Balāgha (Khuṭab al-Imām 'Alī)*, ed. and corr. Ṣubḥī al-Ṣāliḥ. n.p. Beirut: Lebanon, 1387/1967, 1st ed., p. 303.

﴿*O mankind! You are the ones who stand in need of God, and God—He is the Sufficient, the Laudable*﴾[4]

The Universe Is Created With Wisdom and Purpose

God ﷻ says,

﴿وَما خَلَقنَا السَّماءَ وَالأَرضَ وَما بَينَهُما لاعِبينَ﴾

﴿*wa-mā khalaqnā s-samā'a wa-l-'arḍa wa-mā baynahumā lā'ibīn*[a]﴾

﴿لَو أَرَدنا أَن نَتَّخِذَ لَهوًا لَاتَّخَذناهُ مِن لَدُنّا إِن كُنّا فاعِلينَ﴾

﴿*law 'aradnā 'an nattakhidha lahwan la-ttakhadhnāhu min ladunnā 'in kunnā fā'ilīn*[a]﴾

﴿بَل نَقذِفُ بِالحَقِّ عَلَى الباطِلِ فَيَدمَغُهُ فَإِذا هُوَ زاهِقٌ ۚ وَلَكُمُ الوَيلُ مِمّا تَصِفونَ﴾

﴿*bal naqdhifu bi-l-ḥaqqi 'alā l-bāṭili fa-yadmaghuhū fa-'idhā huwa zāhiqun wa-lakumu l-waylu mimmā taṣifūn*[a]﴾

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[4] Sūrat Fāṭir, Verse 15.

﴿We did not create the sky and the earth and whatever is between them for play. Had We desired to take up some diversion We would have surely taken it up with Ourselves, were We to do [so]. Rather We hurl the truth against falsehood, and it crushes its head, and behold, falsehood vanishes! And woe to you for what you allege [about God]﴾[5]

God ﷻ created creation while He was self-sufficient and transcendent from needing them. This does not mean that creation was aimless; aimlessness contradicts divine wisdom. God ﷻ said,

﴿أَفَحَسِبتُم أَنَّما خَلَقناكُم عَبَثًا وَأَنَّكُم إِلَينا لا تُرجَعونَ﴾

﴿'a-fa-ḥasibtum 'annamā khalaqnākum 'abathan wa-'annakum 'ilaynā lā turja'ūn[a]﴾

﴿Did you suppose that We created you aimlessly, and that you will not be brought back to Us?'﴾[6]

"Aimless" describes something with no real purpose and is the opposite of wisdom. The negation in "and that you will not be brought back

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[5] Sūrat al-Anbiyā', Verses 16-18.

[6] Sūrat al-Mu'minūn, Verse 115.

to Us?'"[7] means that people thought that there was no wisdom behind their creation.

Any action must be done for a specific goal; naturally, the goal behind sending prophets ﷺ was the perfection of humankind. Religions have stated that prophets were sent to help man and aid him in reaching perfection.

Human life suffers from a lack and a defect that cannot be fixed, individually or with the help of other ordinary members of society. For this reason, man should seek the help of revelation.

The Goal of Creation: The Islamic Vision

God ﷻ asks, "Does man suppose he has been abandoned to futility?"[8] What is the purpose of creation? God ﷻ said,

﴿وَما خَلَقتُ الجِنَّ وَالإِنسَ إِلّا لِيَعبُدونِ﴾

﴿wa-mā khalaqtu l-jinna wa-l-'insa 'illā li-ya'budūn﴾

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[7] Ibid.

[8] Sūrat al-Qiyāmah, Verse 36.

﴿I did not create the jinn and the humans except that they may worship Me﴾[9]

This means that worship is the purpose behind the creation of the Jinn and the humans. What does this goal mean, and what is the point of worship?

From Ibn Abī ʿUmayr, he said, "I said to Abū al-Ḥasan Mūsā b. Jaʿfar, 'What does the saying of the Prophet ﷺ, 'Go on working, for each creature is aided in the purpose that it was created for' mean?' He said, 'God created the Jinn and humans to worship Him. He did not create them to disobey Him. That is the meaning of God's saying, 'I did not create the jinn and the humans except that they may worship Me.'[10] God aided each creature in the purpose that He created them for. Woe to those who prefer blindness to guidance!'"[11]

From Imām Jaʿfar al-Ṣādiq ﷺ: "Imām al-Ḥusayn b. ʿAlī ﷺ went to his companions and said, 'God only created His servants so they may know Him. If

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[9] Sūrat al-Dhāriyāt, Verse 56.

[10] Ibid.

[11] Majlisī, ʿAllamah Muḥammad Bāqir, *Biḥār al-Anwār al-Jāmiʿa li-Durar al-Aʾimma al-Aṭhār*, Beirut: Muʾassasat al-Wafāʾ, 1403/1983, 2nd ed., Vol. 5, p. 157.

they knew Him, they would worship Him, and if they worship Him, that will suffice them from worshiping anyone other than Him."[12]

Many verses in the Noble Qur'ān contain allusions to the purpose behind creating a man or the universe. These allusions may seem different, but if we look closely, we will notice that they refer to one truth. These allusions include the following.

1. Worship: God ﷻ said, "I did not create the jinn and the humans except that they may worship Me."[13]

2. Testing people: God ﷻ said,

﴿وَهُوَ الَّذِي خَلَقَ السَّماواتِ وَالأَرضَ فِي سِتَّةِ أَيّامٍ وَكانَ عَرشُهُ عَلَى الماءِ لِيَبلُوَكُم أَيُّكُم أَحسَنُ عَمَلًا﴾

﴿wa-huwa lladhī khalaqa s-samāwāti wa-l-'arḍa fī sittati 'ayyāmin wa-kāna 'arshuhū 'alā l-mā'i li-yabluwakum 'ayyukum 'aḥsanu 'amalan﴾

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[12] Ibid., Vol. 5, p. 312.

[13] Sūrat al-Dhāriyāt, Verse 56.

﴿It is He who created the heavens and the earth in six days —and His Throne was [then] upon the waters — that He may test you [to see] which of you is best in conduct﴾[14]

3. Divine mercy:

﴿إِلَّا مَن رَّحِمَ رَبُّكَ ۚ وَلِذَٰلِكَ خَلَقَهُمْ﴾

﴿illā man raḥima rabbuka wa-li-dhālika khalaqahum﴾

﴿except those on whom your Lord has mercy —and that is why He created them﴾[15]

4. Learning and knowledge of God's ﷻ attributes:

﴿اللَّهُ الَّذِي خَلَقَ سَبعَ سَماواتٍ وَمِنَ الأَرضِ مِثلَهُنَّ يَتَنَزَّلُ الأَمرُ بَينَهُنَّ لِتَعلَموا أَنَّ اللَّهَ عَلىٰ كُلِّ شَيءٍ قَديرٌ وَأَنَّ اللَّهَ قَد أَحاطَ بِكُلِّ شَيءٍ عِلمًا﴾

﴿ʾallāhu lladhī khalaqa sabʿa samāwātin wa-mina l-ʾarḍi mithlahunna yatanazzalu l-ʾamru baynahunna li-taʿlamū ʾanna llāha ʿalā kulli

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[14] Sūrat Hūd, Verse 7.

[15] Sūrat Hūd, Verse 119.

shay'in qadīrun wa-'anna llāha
qad 'aḥāṭa bi-kulli shay'in 'ilman

﴿It is God who has created seven heavens, and of the earth [a number] similar to them. The command gradually descends through them, that you may know that God has power over all things, and that God comprehends all things in knowledge﴾[16]

Even a little contemplation of these verses shows us that some of them are precedents to others. Knowledge is a precedent for worship, and worship is a precedent for testing and human perfection, and testing and human perfection are precedents for benefitting from God's ﷻ mercy.

The purpose of our creation is our perfection and elevation, which happens through our knowledge of our Creator and our worship of or obedience to Him. By obeying God ﷻ, we grow more perfect and walk the path of wisdom (*ḥikma*), and by disobeying Him, we sink toward animality, lust, vain talk (*laghū*), and purposelessness.

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[16] Sūrat al-Ṭalāq, Verse 12.

Not Forgetting Your Share of This World

What we said earlier about the purposefulness behind the creation of humankind and obedience and worship being the basis of human life does not mean that we must only look to what is beyond the world. Islam is a religion that mimics man's nature (*ṭabīʿa*) and natural disposition (*fiṭra*) and gives everything its proper dues. Man has a material side that must be taken into consideration. If it is not taken into consideration at all, this will lead to an adverse reaction. Imām ʿAlī ﷺ says, "Give your hearts a break, for if they are forced to do things, they will become blind."[17] He also narrated it ﷺ: "The hearts have an appetite and an activity and a decline. Approach them according to their appetite and activity, for if the heart is forced to do something, it becomes blind."[18]

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[17] Al-Aḥsāʾī, Ibn Abī Jumhūr, *ʿAwālī al-Laʾālī al-ʿAzīziyya fil-Aḥādīth al-Dīniyya*, ed. Ḥajj Aqā Mujtabā al-ʿIrāqī, Dār Sayyid al-Shuhadāʾ lil-Nashr, Qom: Iran, 1403/1983, 1st ed., Vol. 3, p. 296.

[18] Sharīf Raḍī, Muḥammad b. al-Ḥusayn, *Nahj al-Balāgha*, ed. Ṣāliḥ, 503.

Blameworthy and Purposeful Diversions

God ﷻ says,

﴿وَما هٰذِهِ الحَياةُ الدُّنيا إِلّا لَهوٌ وَلَعِبٌ ۚ وَإِنَّ الدّارَ الآخِرَةَ لَهِيَ الحَيَوانُ ۚ لَو كانوا يَعلَمونَ﴾

﴿*wa-mā hādhihi l-ḥayātu d-dunyā ʾillā lahwun wa-laʿibun wa-ʾinna d-dāra l-ʾākhirata la-hiya l-ḥayawānu law kānū yaʿlamūn*[a]﴾

﴿*The life of this world is nothing but diversion and play, but the abode of the Hereafter is indeed Life, had they known!*﴾[19]

Diversion is any action that distracts man from the primary aspects of life. As for play, it is a name for all actions involving some imaginative system and goal. During the play, for example, one person pretends to be a king, the other pretends to be a minister, the third pretends to be an army commander, and the fourth pretends to be a thief. After this playtime slot is over, everything goes back to the ordinary.

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[19] Sūrat al-ʿAnkabūt, Verse 64.

Some narrations criticize vain diversions that cause a person to forget his serious responsibilities. The Commander of the Believers ﷺ said, "Diversion is one of the fruits of ignorance."[20] And "Those who are overly fond of play and heedless because of diversion and amusement will never become sensible."[21] On the other hand, some ḥadīths point out the existence of a purposeful diversion that believers engage in to raise their spirits. The Prophet ﷺ said, "Take up archery, for it is the best of your diversions."[22]

This means that the believer should be severe and wise in life but without turning away from life and the cultivation of it.

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[20] al-Laythī al-Wāsiṭī, Shaykh Kāfī al-Dīn ʿAlī b. Muḥammad, *ʿUyūn al-Ḥikam wal-Mawāʿiẓ*, ed. Shaykh Ḥusayn al-Ḥusaynī al-Bīrjandī, Qom: Dār al-Ḥadīth, 1418, 1st ed., p. 61.

[21] Ibid., p. 414.

[22] al-Muttaqī al-Hindī, ʿAlāʾ al-Dīn ʿAlī al-Muttaqī b. Ḥusām al-Dīn, *Kanz al-ʿUmmāl fī Sunan al-Aqwāl wal-Afʿāl*, ed. And comm. Shaykh Bakrī Ḥayyānī, corr. Shaykh Ṣafwat al-Saqqā, Muʾassasat al-Risāla, n.p.: 1409/1989, Beirut: Lebanon, Vol. 4, p. 351.